

I CLAIM:

1. A method of stimulating an immune response in a human or animal subject, which method comprises administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of an attenuated herpes virus which:

- (i) lacks a functional vhs gene, or a functional equivalent thereof;
- (ii) lacks a functional gene encoding ICP47, or a functional equivalent thereof; and
- (iii) comprises a functional UL43 gene, or a functional equivalent thereof

such that dendritic cells are infected with said virus.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said virus is a herpes simplex virus 1 or 2.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said virus lacks at least one further functional immediate early gene.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said immediate early gene is selected from genes encoding ICP0, ICP4, ICP22, ICP27 or functional equivalents thereof.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein said virus lacks both a functional gene encoding ICP27 and a functional gene encoding ICP4.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said virus comprises a heterologous gene.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said heterologous gene is operably linked to a control sequence permitting expression of said heterologous gene in a dendritic cell.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said heterologous gene encodes a polypeptide of therapeutic use.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said heterologous gene encodes a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of: a polypeptide, the level of expression of which is increased in or on the surface of tumour cells as compared to non-tumour cells; a polypeptide which is present in or on the surface of tumour cells but absent from non-tumour cells; a polypeptide capable of modifying immune responses; and a polypeptide of parasitic, viral or bacterial origin.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein said virus comprises more than one heterologous gene.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein said virus comprises a heterologous gene or genes capable of modulating an immune response.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein said heterologous gene encodes a chemokine, cytokine, or co-stimulatory molecule.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein said subject is a human subject.
14. The method of claim 1, wherein the virus is administered by injection, by infusion, by an intra- or trans-dermal route, or by biolistic means.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein the subject is in need of treatment of or protection against a pathogenic infection.
16. The method of claim 1, wherein the subject is in need of treatment of or protection against cancer.